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From: Work Group 4: Enhancing the Campus Community

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Sustainable personnel and environmental practices are at the heart of enhancing our campus community. We recognize that efforts to create a greener university and improve working conditions on campus are interrelated enterprises. Our proposal is to promote a sustainability philosophy, to be represented in three core areas:

- **Our people;**
- **Our physical environment;**
- **Our curriculum.**

Part of the sustainability philosophy has to do with caring for and about place. Thus, this particular idea has to do with trying to create a place that outwardly reflects and fosters personal growth, intellectual exploration, and a commitment to maintaining what Yale president Bart Giamatti called the "space apart" of a university. Place is not separable from pedagogy. One's environment is part and parcel of one's philosophy and approach to learning. If a place has character, has identity, then it will resonate with and reinforce the character of its faculty and staff, and with the developing identities of its students. It will truly be a coherent *environment* that encourages an attitude of preservation and conservation among its students and its employees. In this way, focusing on place is inherently sustainable in intent and in outcome.

OUR PEOPLE

The people of UW–Eau Claire are our most valuable resource. Work Group 4 proposes a variety of outcomes that will represent an ongoing revolution in the overall ethic that guides our principles, our policies, our procedures, and our decisions. We believe this begins with intentionally adopting the following assumptions about all university personnel and their work with us. Because every aspect of work life is open to questioning in order to move toward a more sustainable place, UW–Eau Claire will adopt and act upon the following official assumptions about our people:

- We hire talented, creative, diverse, capable people;
- We foster an environment that encourages invested and engaged participation;
- We trust our people to do good work, do the best they can, and take pride in what they do;
- Our work is guided by the abilities/dreams and commitments of our people;
- Our work changes according to the genuine best interests of students, the community and the mix of faculty/staff;
- Our work life is guided by ethical principles;

- Our work enhances our lives;
- Work is an important part, but only a part, of the whole human being;
- We recruit, admit and enroll top-quality students;
- Our students are the center of our mission; all procedures advance their education;
- Our administrators/leaders are committed to and model practices that are just and consistent;
- We always assume trust and encourage connection between and among divisions, departments and colleges.

Action Strategies

Create a work environment that supports the whole individual including providing birth-to-two-year infant care, providing options for individuals caring for family members, and providing flexible work schedules;

Initiate a review of campus policies, procedures, and committees to assure practices that support the campus and personnel sustainability;

Create a UW-Eau Claire biannual climate survey to assure that the campus environment supports its employees and is in sync with the above assumptions;

Create institutes, centers and interdisciplinary programs that break down silos and facilitate collaborative work acknowledging and valuing the diversity of talents and contributions of all UWEC employees.

OUR ENVIRONMENT

UW-Eau Claire's campus is widely admired for our beautiful natural surroundings. Campus decisions regarding energy, transportation, and buildings should reflect a deep sense of respect for the environment. Sustainability efforts are occurring nationally in higher education, reflected in the UW System Energy Independence Initiative, the American College & University Presidents Climate Commitment, and in the creation of the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education. On a regional level, our sister institutions UW Green Bay, UW River Falls, UW Oshkosh and UW Stevens Point are implementing sustainability practices.

In order to position UW-Eau Claire to do important work on environmental sustainability, we propose the creation of a sustainability coordinator position. Such a person would work with the campus to ensure that sustainability will be an integral part of the following:

Action Strategies

Ensure that the new building and remodeling projects, such as the upcoming work on the Davies Center, enhance sustainability;

Sustain current and develop additional green spaces, including the greening of Garfield Avenue: highlight the river, create a park, and significantly reduce automobile traffic;

Ensure that the campus reduces, reuses and recycles;

Install clean energy sources;

Build on the strong campus connection with Eau Claire transit and partner with other community efforts to provide alternative forms of transportation, e.g., bicycle garages and locker facilities for bicycle riders;

Work with vendors contracting with the university to ensure environmentally and locally friendly practices. For instance, Portland State University's food contract with Sodexo details sustainability requirements such as the use of local and organic foods;

Expand the farmer's market for UW-Eau Claire.

OUR CURRICULUM

For sustainability to take hold it needs to grow organically among our people. Led by our faculty, all parts of this institution - colleges, departments, offices, staff, and students - can collaborate in broad-based efforts to develop a rich and interconnected sustainable curriculum. In turn, the institution needs to commit ongoing resources to accomplish the following; without such commitment at the administrative level, these ideas cannot succeed.

Action Strategies

Encourage people to grow beyond their familiar fields;

Offer time reassignment, freeing an individual from part of his or her teaching load in order that s/he might pursue curricular and program development;

Support in meaningful material ways the work our people do to build a sustainable curriculum, including travel, research, and service conducted off-contract;

Ensure that the features of the new curriculum are part of the standard workloads, not added on.

A Strategy to Achieve a Sustainable Curriculum

A College within a College: Institute for Interdisciplinary Studies

A free-standing entity within the university, with its own budget and infrastructure, drawing on the expertise of people across the campus, would lend authority to UWEC's commitment to working collaboratively. It could also act as a magnet for both prospective faculty/staff and prospective students, those who are excited by opportunities for networks and interconnectedness (another version of the sustainable campus), for a truly liberal-studies experience that they can't find at any other institutions - what David Orr calls opening students, faculty and staff "to the world of ideas, the Great Conversation."

Institutes within universities generally have their own charter and are almost without exception cross-disciplinary in spirit and in fact, and often have their own executive directors and administrative offices. The Newcomb College Institute at Tulane University, for example, "is a dynamic interdisciplinary academic center designed to enhance undergraduate women's education at Tulane." Massey University in New Zealand has broken a number of its colleges into multi-disciplinary institutes: the Institute of Natural Resources, for example, within the College of Sciences; or the Institute of History, Philosophy, and Classics within the College of Humanities and Social Sciences. These institutes often consolidate a number of departments under a single umbrella and thereby help focus faculty and staff on new research and teaching opportunities. Each entity has its own vision for what joins the disciplines within it, and each reaches across disciplines for interconnected expertise.

A UWEC Institute of Interdisciplinary Studies would rely at first on interested faculty and staff who are already here and who, with financial support (time and/or money), would be eager and willing to help create the vision and substance of the Institute. At the same time, hiring committees should begin looking for more broadly-trained candidates who would contribute to one or two Institute courses each academic year. Affiliation with the Institute must be part of our expected workload, not an add-on, and our Personnel Committees must therefore value and reward the work being done outside the disciplinary parameters of particular departments or programs.

The Institute could take advantage of ideas already put forth for truly collaborative teaching, with the faculty and staff in the same room at the same time, building on each other, challenging each other, modeling for students the different modes of inquiry as well as the ability to find common language. It could also, for example, promote cohorts of students (learning communities) who take the same pod of courses and are therefore encouraged to discuss ideas across those courses with each other. All told, we will have a fully integrated, engaging, and sustainable curriculum that supports our people and our environment.